mother, for example, fed her child rice gruel (okayu) at eight months and at the age of one year the child began eating sweet potatoes. By the time the child is ready to walk and play, he often carries with him a piece of sweet potato, and, in season, a piece of sugar cane. 853 262

A party is held on the first birthday anniversary of the child. This is more elaborate than the one which honored his birth. Birthdays are not celebrated each year. After the first anniversary, the next are on the 13th, 25th, 37th, 49th, and 61st birthdays, that is, at twelve year intervals. 852 527

The party for the first birthday of a child is particularly tender and affectionate. At one year, he can walk or stumble, and answer or smile to the calls of his parents and grandparents. He can pick up things, throw them, and make his presence felt. The exhibition of these skills becomes part of the celebration. It is customary to invite both relatives and friends, who bring a small money present, from ¥20 which is usual to ¥100 which is uncommon. [856]

During the party, the child is given several symbolic gifts. These are placed on a low table in the middle of the room which the child can easily walk to and reach. Usually the gifts are a book, a fountain pen (or a writing brush, fude), an abacus (soroban), and a stack of paper money. These symbolize the wish that the child will become proficient in learning, writing, counting and mathematics, and will become rich. The child is eagerly watched as he unsteadily toddles to the table to see which article he picks up first. While the act is not taken seriously, the article which the child picks up first is supposed to indicate the field of endeavor in which he will be most fortunate. 527 852 431 [212] [802] [554]

These parties, small or large, include men, women, and children, but the majority of the guests usually are men. After the child has gone to bed, the party continues. In more formal and larger parties, the guests first come up to the father, go on their knees, bow, and make a short speech of congratulation. Sometimes these speeches sound as if they are prepared beforehand, other times as if they are spoken spontaneously. There is an exchange of sake between the father and his guest, both sipping from the same cup, the usual custom. The mother and the female relatives during this time are in the kitchen preparing the food. 852 527 [576] [537]

Women sit by themselves. This is true of all celebrations when the sexes are together. Women do not drink. (In a similar party near Matsuda, the old women--usually over 60--drank a little). The jolly old women also love to dance solos in the traditional style. They dance with grace and vigor. The evening progresses without any planned entertainment. There is talking and drinking, singing, and samisen playing. Men, with a repertoire of Okinawan songs, sing in [562] [535] [537] [533]

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

During the primary and junior high school years, no exacting demands are made at home. Young girls after school strap the baby on their back and go out to play, or they may fetch water from the well, pond, or faucet, carrying it home in buckets hanging from a pole resting on their shoulders, or they may help in preparing the evening meal. Younger boys, 12 and over, help with feeding the pigs or run errands, but they have more leisure than the girls. There is night study at home, including practice on the abacus and reading to which the parents listen, correcting the errors. Formal education, for a large majority, ends with the completion of junior high school.

As children grow older, they continue in off hours to help around the home, help which follows the lines of the male and female division of labor of adulthood. This is not a strict division, as there are many areas in which both sexes do common chores. In the agricultural villages, girls continue to help around the home, carry water, and hoe in the sweet potato patches. In the fishing village, they also carry water, help with the laundry, and start helping the older women in selling and distributing fish. The boys work more in the paddies. In the fishing village, they may make trips to the sea, but as a rule, this does not begin until later.

For those who go to senior high school, there is a noticeable change from the earlier school experience. They enter at about 14 or 15 and remain in high school 3 years. It is a period of growing maturity, and the older they get the shyer they seem to become. Girl's hair is allowed to grow longer, perhaps to neck or shoulder length, less often in long braids, and the bangs remain. A big change takes place in the hair styles of the boys. The close clipped haircut is abandoned and the hair is allowed to grow long. Often it is not cut at all on the top, so that in two or three years, it has acquired considerable length.

The child who leaves school at the end of primary or junior high school is more quickly absorbed in the daily work life and traditional occupations of the family. The senior high school student has teaching, clerking, translating, or other white collar work in mind. The boy who leaves school earlier might drive a truck or a horse cart, or adopt the occupation of his father. This is likely to be a time killing period for those young men who live in the fishing village or whose families lack land.

6

Early Adulthood and the Engagement

In early adulthood and before marriage, a son of the house might be given a separate room or a small outlying shed which he fixes up for himself. The young girls, more and more, assume full time duties in the home, relieving the mother. Often the mother and her young daughter work together in the fields. These mature young girls also may take over the care of younger children. Young men from 17 on are

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa A67
Taira

financier, the abacus a mathematician, the book a scholar, and food a glutton. The villagers did not seem to place much credence in the choice. Mothers laughed when asked what choices their children made and commented, "It's something to talk about, but many times we can't even remember which child chose what!"

The child continues to be carried on the back until the next sibling is born, the interval being between about two or three years. By the time an infant is a year old, he has been taken through every nook and cranny of the village. He has also seen all the adults and children of the village and has witnessed the economic and social-ceremonial activities. Whereas he slept most of the time when he was young, he now begins to participate in what goes on about him. He claps his hands in glee in response to his older sibling's delight over some aspect of play or raises his arm in defiance of another child who attempts to strike at his older sibling. In spite of the fact that he is capable of crawling or learning to walk within the second half year of his life, he is kept on the back. He does not protest or clamor to be put down; he seems to prefer being carried to being left to crawl.

Caretakers are too busy with work or play to let the child crawl about freely, so there is no crawling stage in Taira. Older siblings are too involved in play to sit and patiently watch a crawler. The older child would also be severely punished should the infant pick up some object and swallow it or injure himself in his crawling. One 8-year-old found that the 10-month-old sister she toted on her back took to standing on the ground and jouncing up and down every time she squatted to play. After several unsuccessful attempts to stop this annoying behavior, she unstrapped her and allowed her to crawl about freely. The older girl became so engrossed in the game that her mouth dropped open and eyes turned round with fear when one of her playmates shouted, "Hey! the baby put some dirt into her mouth!" Immediately she rushed to "flush" the baby's mouth out with her fingers and promptly strapped her onto the back again and continued playing despite the uncomfortable jouncings. The baby did not protest at being restrapped; she just jounced and played with her hands.

A mother who sits and plucks sweet potato leaves off the vines for hog feed works more efficiently with the baby on her back. Crawling around on the loose floorboards near the fire pit or over the edge of the raised floor, the child would require constant attention. On one occasion the observer was sitting and talking with a mother who was weaving a bamboo basket in her front room. The floor was littered with bamboo shavings and slats. As the mother worked, she was relaxed. She turned and twisted the sharp ends of the bamboo slats, leaving pointed

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

effectively in the case of a boy who did not respond to red pepper or black paper. The mother described how she tried to fend off the boy one day by simply refusing. As he fussed and cried there was a loud clanging of the pots in the kitchen. The boy stopped crying and looked at the mother who pretended to be very frightened. "Look now! There! It's a big rat coming for your mother's breast, let's hide it, quick, quick!" And with that she buttoned her blouse hurriedly and took the boy in her arms. She laughed as she described how she reminded him thereafter about the rat and how he ran to her and held onto her breasts protectively.

For the child, this whole interim period is a stormy one filled with tantrums, whining, and obstinancy. At no time, however, does the child resort to thumbsucking or other breast substitutes. For older siblings who are his caretakers, this period is a very unpleasant one. Many things displease the child. If his caretaker squats, he screams to have him stand; if he stands, he whines to have him walk. Frequently the sibling caring for him reflects the changing attitude toward the child, and, jiggles him up and down impatiently with a frown and curt comment, "What is it!"

As far as actual nourishment is concerned, weaning should not be so traumatic. Long before weaning commences, when the child is about one, he is given a spoon with which he can learn to feed himself. If families can afford it, they purchase new spoons and special small-sized rice bowls as well as chopsticks for these novices. When the budget is so limited that purchases of new implements are impossible, adult-sized ones are used, and often as not the tablespoon used for cooking and serving proves useful.

At mealtime the entire household sits in the back room, which is next to the kitchen. The head of the family sits nearest to the raised hearth, and the rest of the members form a circle to the left and right of him at a low round or rectangular table. The baby sits on his mother's or grandmother's lap. Usually the mess resulting from this early training period in self-feeding is ignored. The adult holding the novice in his lap occasionally picks up the dropped rice and thrusts small pieces of fish or vegetable into his mouth. Only when he bangs the table excessively with his spoon do his elders mildly chide him. At first the adult holding him will absently reach for the offending arm and slip some food into his mouth. Later they will begin reprimanding him by scowling and glaring at him saying, "Me-me!" (child talk for "eye," meaning "I look at you disapprovingly.") But all this is done in a very gentle way, and often when the novice bursts into tears from fright of the disapproving response, he will be hugged, laughed at, and

possibly have lowered standards of sanitation. Morale may also be a factor; in the instance just mentioned the morale of the grandmother was undoubtedly better than that of her daughter and daughter-in-law whom she criticized. 863 178

A very small baby may be carried in the arms, but usually it is carried on the back. The mother places it with its belly to her back, its legs spread apart, and its head about at a level with the top of her shoulder. She secures it there with a long sash that runs once under its bottom, makes an X across her chest, passes around its shoulders, and ties in front. A baby is carried most frequently by its mother, but may also be carried a good deal by others, of either sex and any age, grandparents and older siblings being most frequent. The baby may look over the shoulder of its carrier or it may simply sleep, often with its head back and rolling. If it is fretful its carrier may lean forward a bit and jog it to sleep. Larger children may be carried without the sash, by just letting them hang on. Babies are carried about while all sorts of tasks are being performed. 854

Mothers often carry their babies into the fields when they go out to work, but when they are working in the house they may put their babies to sleep on the floor of the house. If a baby is put to sleep on the floor it is made to sleep on its back. Often the hard floor, which may or may not be covered with a thin mat, will cause the back of the baby's head to become flattened, or if the baby constantly turns its head to one side, the head may become assymetrical, but later fills out to assume its normal shape. Some mothers use a small mosquito net on a frame to protect the sleeping baby from insects, but frequently it is uncovered and flies may alight on it. A few mothers use a hammock-like device called 'burank', as a cradle; these are said to be becoming more popular. At night children, especially smaller children, sleep with their parents on quilts on the floor, under the one large net. [513]

Children are expected to learn to walk at about 12 to 14 months. Early walking is a sign of good health so that if a child is late to walk, the parents may worry about it. As Glacken points out, there is an important change in the life of the child at this time. Instead of being carried everywhere on his mother's or older sibling's back, the child is now put down and expected to toddle along behind his mother, who is not always sympathetic when he fails to keep up. This change may be a greater trauma to the child than weaning or toilet-training.[1] 856 866

Children are said to begin talking at about a year and a half. The first words are usually, nowadays, 'o-kaa', o-tō', 'o-baa', the Japanese equivalents of "daddy", "mommy", and "grandma". Parents do not worry if a child is a little late in talking. 856

Childhood: Adult Attitudes Okinawans recognize clearly that children are not capable of participating in most adult activities and indeed appear to regard it as undesirable that they do so. Okinawan attitude contrasts sharply with the "modern" American one that takes 858 [171]

[1] Glacken, 1953, p. 264.

858 children to be "little people". From this viewpoint the Okinawans appear to
171 regard children as being not yet quite human. Okinawan children can observe, overtly or covertly, probably a good deal more of adult life than American children can observe and Okinawan adults discuss matters in front of children that American adults would not discuss before children, yet the Okinawan adult appears to expect his children to understand far less of what is done or said than the American does. To illustrate, an Okinawan grandmother may discuss a three-year old's illegitimate origin in its presence, tease it to the point of tears by offering to give it away to the passing American, and then say nothing when it wantonly snatches and breaks something of value. The American is likely to regard the talking as a possible cause of complexes, the teasing as downright cruel, and the tolerance as intolerable lack of discipline.

Small children are free to observe all that goes on in the house and yard during their waking hours. They are not subject to any rules determining when they are to go to bed. There is hardly a formal gathering into which they cannot insinuate themselves for hand-outs. They are taken to the theatre, where they may have to be shooed off the stage by the actors themselves.
864 The only aspect of life that seems to be deliberately withheld from them is
858 sex. They are told that babies come out of their mothers' knees, and although they may overhear a good deal about the sexual relationships of different people and the difficulties that result from them, they are given no notion of the nature of sex. I will discuss this in more detail under attitudes toward sex.

858 Although children seem bold in actions, they are not bold in speech.
• 856 As a matter of fact they often do not respond when spoken to and seem unwilling to venture to speak at all. I make this statement not merely on the
[104] basis of my own experience as an outsider attempting to talk to them; an Okinawan friend also pointed out how different the children in the north were from those of Central and Southern Okinawa---the Northern children answered his questions when he spoke to them. Some of the children's shyness about speaking may be due to the fact that they usually speak Okinawan in the home
[152] and then have to learn Japanese in school. Moreover, they soon learn to feel that Okinawan is inferior to Japanese as a medium of polite or intellectual expression; they may be shy because they fear to speak Okinawan since it is inferior and because they fear to speak Japanese since they cannot speak it well. But I have the impression that children are also often unresponsive when an adult speaks to them in Okinawan and when the language of the answer
868 is not a factor. I believe that there is another factor that is almost in-
171 herent in the nature of both the Japanese and the Okinawan languages. When
198 speaking to children in Japanese, and also very likely when speaking in Okinawan, adults use a different form of speech than the form they use when addressing adults. Somewhat different forms of speech for children are probably used in every society; they do exist in the United States, but never to such a striking extent as in Japanese. Japanese and Okinawan both have a range of verb forms expressing several degrees of politeness or formality, and to some extent there are also levels of vocabulary corresponding to them. In speaking to a child, the adult uses the simplest verb forms, the simplest words, and then speaks not in whole sentences but rather in a series of phrases each